

VARIANCE TO STANDARD APPLICATION for 10.55.601(3)

COUNTY—Powell

DISTRICT—Powell County High School

LIST THE SCHOOL OR MULTIPLE SCHOOLS THAT ARE REQUESTING THE VARIANCE(S): Powell County High School

1. **Is this an initial application (2 years) or a Renewal application (3 years)?** Initial application (2 years).
2. **Is this for 1st semester implementation or 2nd semester implementation?** 1st semester implementation.
3. **Please attach evidence through official minutes of the board of trustees that local school community stakeholders were involved in the consideration and development of the proposed variance to standards. Stakeholder groups include trustees, administrators, teachers, classified school staff, parents, community members and students as applicable.** A copy of the official minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting on June 10 when the variance was discussed is attached. A list of visitors to the meeting including community members, classified staff members and parents is also attached.
4. **Please provide evidence that the board of trustees adopted its application for variance at an official, properly noticed meeting of its board of trustees.** A copy of the official minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting on June 10 is attached.
5. **Standard(s) for which a variance is requested.** 10.55.601(3)
6. **Describe the variance requested.** Due to the rigorous nature of the AdvancED/NWAC accreditation process described above in question 1, the Powell County High School requests that it be allowed to use the AdvancED/NWAC process in replacement of 10.55.601(3). We see this as a duplication of efforts.
7. **Provide a brief statement of mission and objectives of this proposed variance.** It is the mission of the Powell County high School to use this variance to promote rigor, equity, student engagement and depth of application of knowledge for our students. The objectives are as follows:
 - Utilize a school improvement plan that requires identification of goals for improvement of achievement and instruction.
 - Utilize collaborative learning communities to increase teacher skills in grading and reporting that is based on clear criteria for attainment of knowledge and skills.
 - Continue to develop the use of data to promote growth in student learning, student readiness for the next level, and student success at the next level.

- Develop a comprehensive student assessment system with local and standard assessments resulting in a range of data about student learning.
8. **In what way does this variance to standard the specific needs of the students in your school(s)?** Powell County High School is regionally accredited through AdvancED/NWAC. To obtain this accreditation, the school goes through a rigorous process that includes a self-assessment in relation to research based standards and indicators, student performance diagnostics, survey data from parents, teachers and students as well as an external review from an outside team of educators every 5 years. An extensive continuous education school improvement process is required from AdvancED indicators 1.3, 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 3.11, 5.4, 5.5. A school district education profile is required from AdvancED indicators 5.1, 5.2, 3.2, 3.6. A description of strategies for assessing student progress is required from AdvancED indicators 3.2 and 5.1 and a professional development component is required from indicators 2.6, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.11 and 5.3. A description of these indicators is attached. With the steps required through the AdvancED process, PCHS meets and exceeds 10.55.601(3) therefore duplication of efforts is not needed. Due to the self-review and external review required, students will be benefited by vertically and horizontally aligned programs. This process promotes rigor, equity, student engagement and depth of application of knowledge. The school improvement plan requires identification of goals for improvement of achievement and instruction. Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities, and grading and reporting must be based on clear criteria for attainment of knowledge and skills. Finally PCHS must demonstrate, using data, growth in student learning, student readiness for the next level, and student success at the next level.
9. **Variance to Standard: Outline how and why the proposed variance would be:**
- **Workable:** The school has sufficient resources for this variance. An annual fee to AdvancED/NWAC is paid which provides all information needed for the standards and indicators, student performance diagnostics, surveys and survey results. The annual fee also includes the AdvancED Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST), a state-of-the-art system that allows schools to streamline and enhance their efforts to boost student learning. The school also has the opportunity to receive training at the annual AdvancED/NWAC School Improvement Conference.
 - **Educationally sound:** The AdvancED/NWAC standards and indicators are research based. The following is from the AdvancED website: “With over a century of work in schools and districts throughout the world, AdvancED collects and manages information that has the potential to revolutionize the way we think about continuous improvement and the factors that have the greatest promise for ensuring student success. For that reason, we have committed to an ambitious 5-year research agenda that will uncover the impact of accreditation on school improvement and student achievement. The objective is to provide the education community with research-based strategies, conditions, and behaviors that lead to transformative school improvement. A research team of academics and practitioners has already published two studies, *Learning from Accreditation* and *District Accreditation: Leveraging Change*. Dedicated to both school and system improvement, we are proud to be able to share our depth of knowledge with the greater educational community. As a

knowledge leader in the area of education policy and practice, we know our research will not only be a catalyst for positive change, but will transform the way educators approach educational innovation and continuous improvement (AdvancED website <http://www.advanc-ed.org/school-improvement-research>).

- **Designed to meet or exceed results under established standard:** As a result of our AdvancED/NWAC accreditation status, PCHS goes through a rigorous process that includes a self-assessment in relation to research based standards and indicators, student performance diagnostics, survey data from parents, teachers and students as well as an external review from an outside team of educators every 5 years. An extensive continuous education school improvement process is required from AdvancED indicators 1.3, 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 3.11, 5.4, 5.5. A school district education profile is required from AdvancED indicators 5.1, 5.2, 3.2, 3.6. A description of strategies for assessing student progress is required from AdvancED indicators 3.2 and 5.1 and a professional development component is required from indicators 2.6, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.11 and 5.3. A description of these indicators is attached. With the process required through the AdvancED process, PCHS meets and exceeds 10.55.601(3) therefore duplication of efforts is not needed.
- **Where applicable, aligned with program standards under ARM 10.55.1101 through 10.55.1901:** Attached are all AdvancED Standards and Indicators that frame vertical and horizontal alignment for all program offerings required by the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

10. List at least one specific measurable objective that demonstrates that the proposed variance will meet or exceed the results under the current standard:

- a. PCHS will meet or exceed the Mathematics achievement scores based on the Smarter Balance assessments in the spring 2015.
- b. PCHS will meet or exceed the Reading achievement scores based on the Smarter Balance assessments in the spring 2015.
- c. The PCHS graduation rate will exceed 90 percent for the class of 2015.

11. What data or evidence will be gathered to document progress toward meeting the measurable objective?

- a. Mathematics achievement data will be collected from the scores of the Smarter Balance assessments taken in the spring of 2015.
- b. Reading achievement data will be collected from the scores of the Smarter Balance assessments taken in the spring of 2015.
- c. Data related to the district's graduation will be gathered from information provided by the Office of Public Instruction.